



County of San Diego - Parks and Open Space Program

"Advancing Regional Conservation with Service, Integrity and Science for a Sustainable Future"

EARTH FAIR 2003 SPECIAL EDITION

GETTING TO KNOW THE MSCP

Tom Oberbauer, MSCP Environmental Resource Manager

San Diego County is known nationwide for its tremendous diversity of plants and animals and for its number of rare and endangered species. In fact, a study in the January 1997 issue of Science magazine identified San Diego County as one of two counties in the United States that are considered "hot spots" for unique and unusual species. On the other hand, San Diego County has also been known for its tremendous population growth associated with the military, tourism and technological industries. Unfortunately, this increase in the growth rate has resulted in the decrease of the number of unique and unusual species in the area. In the past, as development occurred, small, disconnected areas of open space separated from other habitat areas were created. Sometimes, these areas were too small to support any significant populations of wildlife. Furthermore, as the California State and Federal Governments listed individual species as rare and endangered, local and wildlife agencies as well as property owners would scramble to protect the species. This often resulted in even more small areas of open space and caused confusion and conflict with economic growth issues. In the early 1990's, a concept grew from the Federal Endangered Species Act to create coordinated plans to deal with high numbers of sensitive species as well as development. These plans, known as Habitat Conservation Plans, created a process to identify and conserve the most important habitats. In return, development could be streamlined into the areas that are less biologically important. Because San Diego County contains such a high number of sensitive and potentially rare and endangered species, the Habitat Conservation Plan was taken a step further. This led to the concept of a Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Plan, which assessed 85 species that were already listed as either rare or endangered. The MSCP Plan was the result of 6 years of intense planning and review by a diverse group of private conservationists and developers as well as a number

of public agencies, including the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game. This particular plan covers the southwestern portion of San Diego County. It consists of 582,000 acres and includes the Cities of San Diego, Poway, Chula Vista, Santee, El Cajon, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Imperial Beach, National City and a portion of San Diego County's unincorporated area. In order to participate in the plan each jurisdiction must adopt its own Subarea Plan.



Oak Woodland in San Diego County. Photo by Jeremy Buegge

The County of San Diego adopted a MSCP Plan for the unincorporated portion of the MSCP in October 1997. An overall plan was approved by the City of San Diego in March 1997. The City of Poway adopted its Plan in August 1995. The MSCP creates a more efficient and effective preserve system as well as provides better protection for the rare, threatened and endangered species in the coastal region. The goal of the County's plan is to acquire or permanently protect 98,379 acres. In the five years since the plan was approved, the County and its partners have assembled more than 84% of the preserve. Learn more about the MSCP at <http://www.mscp-sandiego.org>.



RIVER VALLEY PARK OPENS A WINGED WORLD - BIRD AND BUTTERFLY GARDEN IS DEDICATED

Leslie Wolf Branscomb

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Chairman Greg Cox, Deputy CAO, Robert Copper and Parks Director Renée Bahl cut the ribbon. Photo by County Parks

The [San Diego Union Tribune](http://www.signonsandiego.com) has requested that you log on to www.signonsandiego.com to view a copy of this article. If you would like a hard copy of this article sent to you, please email the MSCP staff at MSCP@sdcounty.ca.gov.



KEY LAND ACQUISITIONS CONTRIBUTE TO COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO MSCP PRESERVE

Trish Boaz, MSCP Environmental Resource Manager

January 25, 2002, was an important date for MSCP land acquisition in San Diego County. The State of California Wildlife Conservation Board approved over \$2,000,000 in grant funds and the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors approved the contribution of additional \$2,440,000 toward the purchase 716.5 acres within the Ramona community of Central San Diego County known as Barnett Ranch. Ramona Serena LLC., was the seller of the property.



San Diego sunflower. Photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

This project will protect critical native habitats, including Coastal sage scrub, Mixed chaparral, Engelmann and Coast live oak woodlands, Riparian scrub and native and non-native grasslands. These plant communities provide habitat for over 11 species, including the Coastal whiptail,

Orange-throated whiptail, Golden eagle and Rufous-crowned sparrow. Sensitive plant species San Diego sunflower and Ashy spike moss. Most of the property to be acquired is pristine and undisturbed. Previously grazed areas will provide opportunities for raptor foraging and potential future habitat restoration.

On December 16, 2002, the County purchased lands identified in the County of San Diego's MSCP Subarea Plan, Metro-Lakeside-Jamul Segment, Pre-approved Mitigation Area. This 58.26-acre property, which is immediately adjacent to Louis A. Stelzer County Park, was purchased from Martin H. Shuler and Margaret A. Shuler.

In January 2003, two more acquisitions of lands identified in the County of San Diego MSCP Subarea Plan, Metro-Lakeside-Jamul Segment occurred. The



Coast Live Oak. Photo by Jeremy Buegge

first parcel of 40 acres was purchased from Reams/Thompson for a total of \$180,000, funded by the Wildlife Conservation Board. The second parcel was purchased from Berkeley/Hering et. al. for a total of \$457,200 (\$395,000 from the Wildlife Conservation Board and \$62,200 from the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors). The property consists of a 61.49-acre vacant parcel just east of State Route 67 in Lakeside.



Rufous-crowned sparrow. Photo courtesy of USGS

The State of California Wildlife Conservation Board has been an important partner in land acquisition and preserve assembly. Board members and staff have supported the County's habitat planning process, and have taken actions that resulted in the purchase of thousands of acres of open space.



SAN LUIS REY REGIONAL PARK PLANNING INITIATED BY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Vince Nicoletti, County Department of Parks and Recreation

On March 11, 2003 the San Diego County Board of Supervisors allocated \$500,000 to begin planning efforts for a new regional park along the San Luis Rey River. As envisioned, the park will provide recreational opportunities while preserving the San Luis Rey River and surrounding lands. The San Luis Rey River is located in the northern San Diego County. The river begins its westward flow at Lake Henshaw Dam and enters the Pacific Ocean in Oceanside. The proposed regional park will stretch approximately eight miles, parallel to State Route 76, along the San Luis Rey River from the Old Bonsall bridge to Interstate 15. Recreational opportunities will be limited to those compatible with the sensitive habitat. Creation of the park "would be a heritage for the entire County" said County Supervisor Bill Horn; "a way to preserve a valuable asset".

Preservation of this land will protect habitat suitable for several species, including but not limited to, the least Bell's vireo, California gnatcatcher and arroyo southwestern toad. The majority of the land surrounding the San Luis Rey River is considered willow riparian vegetation. Much of the San Luis Rey River watershed is located in the proposed North County Pre-Approved Mitigation Area. Safeguarding the land will provide connected resource preserve lands for the proposed North County Multiple Species Conservation Program.

The California Department of Transportation is currently studying potential improvements to State Route 76. These improvements will present

numerous environmental concerns. The County is working with the California Department of Transportation and the San Diego Association of Governments to coordinate the park planning efforts with the planning of improvements to State Route 76. A park that includes the preservation of natural resource areas could serve the purpose of mitigating impacts to habitats associated with the construction of SR 76.



Pauma Valley Pond. Photo by Trish Boaz

The preparation of a park concept plan for the San Luis Rey River provides an opportunity to plan for the preservation of wetlands and sensitive habitat in the vicinity of both the San Luis Rey River and SR 76. While planning efforts are still in the early stages, residents in the north county can expect several community workshops in the future, as part of the preparation of the concept plan.

THE MSCP WELCOMES JEREMY BUEGGE



The MSCP welcomes our new staff member, Jeremy Buegge. Jeremy was born and raised in San Diego recently returning to the area after completing his schooling and getting married. He holds a B.S. in Biology

from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas and a M.S. in Plant Biology from Arizona State University in

Tempe, Arizona. He has studied the ecology of deer mice in New Mexico, flora of the Santa Teresa Mountains in southeastern Arizona, surveyed riparian and range vegetation in Arizona's Coronado National Forest and studied the effects of harvesting beargrass for basketry. He is currently familiarizing himself with the formal botanical names of plants he remembers from his childhood. Jeremy is currently managing the Ramona Vernal Pool Study as part of the North County MSCP.



EARTH DAY EVERYDAY - UPCOMING EVENTS COURTESY OF THE MSCP OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Pollution Solution Fair at Cuyamaca College

April 19, 10am

Contact: Marsha Cook

County Department of Environmental Health

858-694-2764

Lakeside Rodeo

April 25 – 27

Contact: Betty Washburn

619-461-8333

Calavera Nature Preserve Earth Fair Celebration

April 26, 8am

Contact: Leslie Beck

The Environmental Trust

619-461-8333

Carlton Oaks Preserve Cleanup

April 26, 9am

Contact: Leslie Beck

The Environmental Trust

619-461-8333

Fallbrook Avocado Festival

April 26

Contact: Fallbrook Chamber of Commerce

760-728-5845

Earth Fair at Balboa Park

April 27, 10am

National Trails Day

June 7

Contact: Patty Heyden

County Department of Parks & Recreation

619-956-4707



Christine Brochard of County MSCP at Sweetwater High School Environmental Health Fair



Bonita High School students beautify The Environmental Trust's Chula Vista Wetlands

The MSCP Outreach Committee consists of representatives from a number of partners in the MSCP effort including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, San Diego National Wildlife Refuge, San Diego Natural History Museum, The Environmental Trust, City of San Diego and County of San Diego MSCP, Parks and Recreation and Environmental Health Departments. The Committee's goal is to increase environmental awareness in San Diego County.

Much of its attention is focused on environmental education. The Committee hopes to educate San Diego youth so that they may have greater opportunities for learning about the MSCP and the environment in general and use this knowledge to make lasting changes in their communities. Stay tuned for updates on the MSCP Outreach Committee in future issues of *MSCP News*.

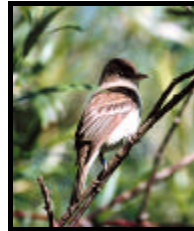


HIGHLIGHTED VEGETATION COMMUNITY: RIPARIAN



Riparian vegetation is one of the most sensitive habitats in California. It has suffered the loss of thousands of acres as the result of clearing in the floodplains for agriculture, sand mining operations, and transportation corridors. Current estimates are that there are roughly 29,000 acres of riparian vegetation in the County, but much of that is now in fragmented patches rather than extensive stream courses. This type of vegetation may still be seen in the San Pasqual Valley, around Lake Hodges, on the San Dieguito River, San Luis Rey River, Sweetwater River and Santa Margarita River. Riparian vegetation exists along stream and valley bottoms

as well as deep canyons in areas where the water table is not far below the soil surface. At one time, all of the major riverbeds in San Diego County supported extensive areas of riparian forest. The indicator species for the presence of riparian vegetation include: several species of willows, the Broad-leaved cottonwoods, sycamores, and Mule fat, a shrub with greasy-scented leaves. The willow, cotton-



wood and sycamore trees are winter deciduous. They are vital to many bird species including the endangered Least bell's vireo and Willow flycatcher. Riparian vegetation is also critical for a variety of amphibians including the endangered Arroyo southwestern toad, Pacific tree frog and Western toad.



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Contributors: Tom Oberbauer, Trish Boaz, Jeremy Buegge, Vince Nicoletti; Leslie Wolf Branscomb, San Diego Union Tribune. Photo Credits: (Page 4) Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Courtesy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southwest Region Ecological Services and Suzanne Langridge, USGS. Editor: Christine Chau.



Multiple Species Conservation Program

County of San Diego
Parks and Open Space Program
Department of Planning and Land Use
Department of Parks and Recreation
5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B
San Diego, CA 92123
www.mscp-sandiego.org



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
APRIL 27, 2003. BALBOA PARK
SAN DIEGO

1 day for Kids, the Environment and Safe & Livable Communities! Team County of San Diego invites you to join them in the March of Dimes® WalkAmerica event starting at 7:00 a.m. Afterwards, we look forward to seeing you at the MSCP booth at Earth Fair 2003 from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.